

**RAILROAD ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION**

**Report No 3787**

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FORT WORTH AND DENVER RAILWAY COMPANY

STAMFORD, TEX

OCTOBER 16, 1957

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**INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION**

**Washington**

## SUMMARY

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DATE	October 16, 1957	
RAILROAD	Fort Worth and Denver	
LOCATION	Stamford, Tex.	
KIND OF ACCIDENT	Collision	
EQUIPMENT INVOLVED	Track motorcar	Freight train
TRAIN NUMBER		78
LOCOMOTIVE NUMBER		Diesel-electric unit 817
CONSIST		15 cars, caboose
ESTIMATED SPEEDS	Being pushed	10 m p h
OPERATION	Timetable and train orders	
TRACK	Single, tangent; 0.07 percent ascending grade eastward	
WEATHER	Cloudy	
TIME	5:20 p m	
CASUALTIES	1 killed	
CAUSE	Failure to take required precautions in operation of track motorcar	

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION

REPORT NO 3787

IN THE MATTER OF MAKING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORTS UNDER  
THE ACCIDENT REPORTS ACT OF MAY 6, 1910

FORT WORTH AND DENVER RAILWAY COMPANY

May 21, 1958

Accident near Stamford, Tex , on October 16, 1957, caused by failure to take required precautions in the operation of a track motorcar

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION<sup>1</sup>

*TUGGLE, Commissioner*

On October 16, 1957, there was a collision between a track motorcar and a freight train on the Fort Worth and Denver Railway near Stamford, Tex , which resulted in the death of one maintenance-of-way employee

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<sup>1</sup> Under authority of section 17 (2) of the *Interstate Commerce Act* the above-entitled proceeding was referred by the Commission to Commissioner Tuggle for consideration and disposition



### Location of Accident and Method of Operation

This accident occurred on that part of the Wichita Falls Division extending between Wichita Falls and Stamford, Tex., 112.65 miles. In the vicinity of the point of accident this is a single-track line over which trains are operated by timetable and train orders. There is no block system in use. The accident occurred on the main track at a point 5.34 miles east of Stamford. In the vicinity of the point of accident the main track is laid on a trestle 251 feet in length. The west end of the trestle is located 4 feet east of the point of accident. From the east on the main track there is a tangent 2,987 feet in length to the point of accident and 70 feet westward. From the west there are, in succession, a tangent 4,751 feet in length, a 2°30' curve to the right 525 feet, and the tangent on which the accident occurred. The grade for westbound trains in the immediate vicinity of the point of accident is 0.07 percent ascending.

Track motorcar setoffs are located at points 302 feet east and 664 feet west of the point of accident.

This carrier's rules for the operation of track motorcars read in part as follows:

57 Foremen in going to and from their work, and all persons using hand or motor cars, must exercise care to avoid accident in places where the view of the track is obscured; they must protect themselves with proper signals when necessary.

73 Employees operating motor or track cars must, when practicable, obtain lineup on movement of trains before fouling a main track. Additional lineups must be obtained during the day when communication is available and conditions require.

The receipt of a lineup does not relieve operator of motor or track car of the responsibility of protecting car as prescribed by the rules.

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The maximum authorized speed for freight trains is 35 miles per hour and for track motorcars 15 miles per hour.

### Description of Accident

On the day of the accident a track supervisor departed westbound from Wichita Falls on a track motorcar. After stopping at Seymour, Munday, and Haskell, the last open office, 51.90 miles, 75.81 miles, and 96.88 miles, respectively, west of Wichita Falls, the track supervisor proceeded westward on the track motorcar and stopped at a point 5.34 miles east of Stamford. Shortly after, the track motorcar was struck by No. 78.

No. 78, an eastbound second-class freight train, consisted of diesel-electric unit 817, 15 cars, and a caboose. This train departed from Stamford at 5:10 p. m., 8 hours 10 minutes late, and while moving at an estimated speed of 10 miles per hour it struck the track motorcar.

None of the equipment was derailed. The track motorcar stopped against the front end of the locomotive 120 feet east of the point of collision. The track motorcar was damaged slightly.

The track supervisor was killed

The weather was cloudy at the time of the accident, which occurred at 5 20 p m.

During the 30-day period preceding the day of the accident the average daily movement in the vicinity of the point of accident was 1 73 trains

The track motorcar is of the belt-drive type, powered by a 1-cylinder 5 to 8 horsepower engine, and equipped with 4-wheel brakes It is provided with an adjustable canvas windshield It weighs 625 pounds

### Discussion

As the track supervisor proceeded westward from Wichita Falls on the track motorcar, stops were made at Seymour, Munday, and Haskell, where he inquired about the location of No 78 He was informed by the agent-operator at each of these points that No 78 was expected to depart from Stamford at 5 00 p m The track motorcar departed from Haskell about 4 30 p m Before departing, the track supervisor informed the agent-operator at that point that he intended to proceed westward and to clear No 78 by setting the track motorcar off at a setoff located 8 12 miles west of Haskell The accident occurred at a point 2 31 miles west of that setoff The view of an eastbound train from the point of accident is restricted by curvature of the track and vegetation to a distance of approximately 1,000 feet It is apparent that the track supervisor did not become aware that No 78 was approaching in sufficient time to set the track motorcar off at either of the setoffs located near the point of accident

As No 78 was approaching the point where the accident occurred the speed was about 35 miles per hour The enginemen and the front brakeman were in the control compartment of the diesel-electric unit, and the conductor and flagman were in the caboose The brakes of this train had been tested and had functioned properly when used en route The headlight was lighted brightly The engineer said that he sounded the horn as the train was approaching the curve west of the point of accident The view of the track ahead in the vicinity of the point of accident from the control compartment of the diesel-electric unit of an eastbound train is materially restricted by curvature of the track and vegetation The engineer said that he observed the track motorcar and the track supervisor standing beside it when they were about 1,000 feet distant He thought that the track motorcar was in the clear He said that when the train was about 660 feet west of the track motorcar he observed that it was occupying the main track He immediately initiated an emergency brake application and sounded a warning on the horn He said that the track supervisor was attempting to push the track motorcar eastward when the collision occurred The enginemen estimated that the speed of the train was about 10 miles per hour when the collision occurred

The rules of the carrier require that employees operating track motorcars must exercise care to avoid accidents In places where the view of the track is obscured they must protect themselves with proper signals when necessary When practicable, a lineup on movements of trains must be obtained before fouling a main track, and additional lineups must be obtained during the day when communication is available and conditions require The receipt of a lineup, however, does not relieve the operator of a track motorcar of the responsibility of protecting the track motorcar as prescribed by the rules In the instant case the track supervisor died as a result of injuries

received in the accident and it could not be determined why he failed to clear No 78 by setting the track motorcar off either at the setoff located 8 12 miles west of Haskell as he originally intended or at a setoff west of that point

During the past 10 years the Commission has investigated 68 collisions, including the present case, in which track motorcars were involved. These accidents resulted in the death of 91 persons and the injury of 216 persons.

#### **Cause**

This accident was caused by failure to take required precautions in the operation of a track motorcar.

Dated at Washington, D. C., this twenty-first day of May, 1958

By the Commission, Commissioner Tuggle

(SFAL)

HAROLD D. MCCOY,

Secretary